

I am currently writing an independent studies course for World History using both Tennessee's and California's standards. What is interesting to me about this framework is that it is a MODERN WORLD history course, yet there is very little included about India, which has the 2nd largest population in the world and one of the top 10 economies of the world and continues to grow. Moreover, there is no mention of Gandhi anywhere in the new framework, when his ideology and work were significant for both the US civil rights movements and democratic protests around the world.

Additionally, as a former world history teacher, and a current curriculum writer, it seems the focus of the past California World History Standards have been focused on the world before World War II, and anything in the past 60 years has been given a VERY cursory glance (Standards 10.10 and 10.11, which are vague). I believe it is pivotal, when studying history, for students to see how history relates to their world today. Most teachers take up to 2/3-3/4 of the year to get through World War II, and the rest of the year on the Cold War. Few, get to the fall of communism or anything beyond that. This is largely because the previous standards focused the large majority of standards and framework on the world before WWII.

It is interesting that as a 40 year old, I studied Perestroika in Honors/IB World History course because my teacher found it important (and it was current, since I took it in 1989-1990). As a former history teacher, though, 10-20 years later, very few of my colleagues even covered the fall of Communism in depth, much less anything after that. The last 30 years were often given a very superficial gloss over. As far as the requirements as dictated by California Standards, they were doing what was required of them.

I understand that it has only been 30 years, but you can't just measure it chronologically because change, thanks to technology, is now happening at an exponential rate. If you don't detail the importance of the events of the last 30-40 years in your standards and framework, I guarantee teachers will not either. Furthermore, students will disengage because none of what they are studying seems to pertain to the world they know.

Of course, my belief is that the focus of history in high school should be the critical thinking, analysis, and thinking skills, more than the actual content, since with the internet you can easily access the information. (I believe the focus of English is to teach students how to read, communicate, express themselves, and understand the expressions of others, the focus of math is to be able to create formulas, systems, theorems, and logically and systematically analyze the world around them, science is to learn about the natural world and phenomena around them and the use of the scientific method, and the focus of social studies is to teach students critical thinking skills to form opinions, decipher paradigms and bias, and understand why the world is the way it is today). Still, if you find that the specific content is crucial, the standards should reflect more of the modern meaning students' contemporary world.

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